Strolling Away

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STROLLING AWAY

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Table of Contents

Page

Preface iii

Acknowledgements iv

Dedication v

Foreword by Allison vi

Executive Summary 1

Introduction 8

Section 1 9

The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression (1991-1992) 9

The Impetus of the Research 9

Process 9

Methodology 9

Respondents' Characteristics 10

Policy Implications 10

Program Implications 10

Section 2 11

Strolling Away (2000-2001) 11

The Motivation to Do the Research 11

No Longitudinal Research 11

Methodology 11

Tracking 12

Interviews 12

Interdisciplinary Team 12

Section 3 15

Strolling Away Major Findings 15

Strolling Away 2000-2001 15

1 Leaving the Trade 15

2 Squaring Up 17

3 Return to the Trade 18
4 Preventing a Return 19
5 Last Trick 20
6 Decision Last Trick 21
7 Assisted in Leaving Street 23
8 Assisted Not Returning 23
9 Turning First Trick 25
10 Missing the Street 26
11 Almost Returned 28
12 Steps Leaving 29
13 Afterthoughts 31
14 Thinking About the Street 32
15 Thoughts on Departing 33
16 Surprise Findings 33
17 Rituals 34
18 Off the Street 35

Section 4 37

Concluding Discussion & Recommendations 37

Males in the Sexual Exploitation Trade 37
Supply and Demand Equation 37
Education 37
Support Services 38
New Understanding 40
Counselling Support 40
Social Services 40
Harm Reduction 41

Conclusion by Harry 43

Appendix 1: Research Questions and Tables 45

Appendix 2: Strolling Away Background Table 55

Bibliography 57

Glossary 67

Dr. Susan McIntyre 71

Preface

In 1991-1992, I interviewed 50 young people involved in the sexual exploitation trade in downtown Calgary. A year was dedicated to understanding the lives of these young people. Many that I knew as small children with histories of abuse were now entering the street trade. However, it was clear that not all young people in the sexual exploitation trade had been sexually abused, nor would those unfortunate enough to be sexually abused end up in the trade.

It was for this reason that I completed in-depth research, entitled, "The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression." It revealed that of the 41 females and nine males interviewed, well over three-quarters had experienced sexual abuse prior to their entrance into the trade. This research impacted social policy in the City of Calgary with the result that youth involvement in prostitution was seen to be a form of sexual abuse. For the vast majority of those in the research, their involvement in prostitution was seen as an extension of the sexual abuse they had already faced.

I observed the acceptance of youth involved in prostitution as a form of sexual abuse. I watched the City and Province embrace this paradigm shift, which resulted in policy, legislative and program changes. This shift was slowly spreading across the country and the term youth prostitution was replaced with the term sexual exploitation. The terms "youth prostitution" and "sexual exploitation" are used with the same intent.

It was during this time that I was encouraged by many to look at those originally interviewed in my first study to determine what had occurred in their lives. It was this continued desire to close the chapter on the lives of these 50 young people that created the energy for "Strolling Away".

Acknowledgements

This research was made possible through the energy and support of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary, who provided guidance throughout many stages of this project. As well, a series of individual and corporate anonymous donors saw the wisdom and value in the need for research on sexually exploited youth.

The following organizations provided invaluable direction, information and support.

- AIDS Calgary
- City of Calgary Police
- City of Toronto Police
- City of Halifax Police
- City of Vancouver Police
- Closer to Home
- Edmonton Catholic Social Services
- Enviros Wilderness School Association
- Hull Child and Family Services
- Department of Justice Canada
- Rocky View Child and Family Services
- Servants Anonymous
- Woods Homes of Calgary
- Youth in Care and Custody Network

Dedication

This project is dedicated to the "now not so young people" that are featured in both studies. It is through their strength, commitment and energy that this project has become a reality. I am honored that I was able to spend time with each of you. You have no idea how powerful an experience it was to sit with you nearly ten years after I saw you at the most vulnerable time of your life. Thank you for providing me with the ending to such a painful yet significant story.

It is important to understand that people can survive the abuse experienced as youth. As abuse of this magnitude and longitude does not disappear, society must understand, accept, support and act compassionately in response to hidden scars. As individuals who have or are being sexually exploited through your involvement in prostitution, you have provided vital information about prevention, integration and reintegration. I appreciate your thoughts and ideas and will work hard to have those in positions of power and authority listen. The 38 individuals involved in this research represent a collective total of 260 years of knowledge of the trade. We must listen to you.

In honor and dedication to the spirit of Ms. Adventure.

Dr. Susan McIntyre

Foreword by Allison

There is a saying "whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger," and I believe that to be true.

I was very fortunate to be able to walk away, build a new life and not end up a statistic. The time I spent in the "game" ultimately changed my life, the way I view the world, and more importantly my soul.

Many believed I should never have ended up there. I wasn't considered a typical case. My family did not see it coming. Though I believe there are typical cases, no child is an exception in the minds of the predators that lie in wait to recruit them.

There is no way to describe how it feels to sell yourself to anybody that wants you. Nobody could have told me that, no matter how many hours a night I stood in the shower crying, I would never be able wash away the feeling of hands touching me or the sweat of the last drunken date. I even thought that if I could wear my Walkman as I turned a trick, it would help to drown out the sounds of each new man or allow me to forget where I was just for the length of the next song.

Ultimately, it was a wire cord wrapped around my neck as my blood and what was left of my life slipped away that made me determined to hang on and fight. It was at that moment I became committed to escaping the abuse and building a new life.

The first interview I did for this research captured my pain and devastation of being on the street. The second interview was more important because it concentrated on the struggle and internal battle to stay off the street and out of this lifestyle. The process of coming off and staying off the street is crucial in saving the lives and souls of the many, many children and adults who are prisoner to the "game".

The time between the first and second interview has been an incredible journey. I have reached heights of success that I never would have believed possible such as: raising two wonderful children, graduating from high school and college, having a wonderful career and finally a chance to heal from the pain and abuse. My greatest lesson is that I now believe that dreams are possible and goals achievable.

I am very grateful to be a part of this research. I believe in the ability of every victim of prostitution to be able to rise above the abuse, and with the right tools to help them, achieve and soar into a new future!

Allison[1]

[1] Allison was a participant in the "The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression" research study as well as "Strolling Away".

Executive Summary

The 1991-1992 initial research, entitled "The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression" was conducted with 50 young people who primarily entered the trade during adolescence. The goal was to establish that most of the youth interviewed entered the trade under the age of 18 and that there was a predominance of a history of sexual abuse before the street.

In 2000-2001, the retrospective research, entitled "Strolling Away" was conducted. Interviews with 38 individuals (28 who had been participants in the 1991-1992 research and an additional ten persons) were held to collect their thoughts on the entrance, time in, attempts and successful departures out of the trade. The opportunity to gain insights on our service delivery model in reference to prevention, intervention and reintegration was provided through these interviews.

Characteristics of Respondents

The following are the key characteristics from the respondents of "Strolling Away":

- Males entered the trade earlier on average age 12 years.
- Females entered the trade on average age 15 years.
- Males averaged 12 years in the trade.
- Females averaged six years in the trade.
- A total of 260 years of street work is represented in the 38 interviews.
- 82% of the females had a background of sexual abuse prior to the street.
- 100% of the males had a background of sexual abuse prior to the street.
- 26% of respondents were Aboriginal.

Summary of Highlights

The following are highlights from the 17 lines of inquiry that were presented to the respondents in "Strolling Away". The highlights reflect the order in which the questions were posed and recorded.

Leaving the Trade

- Everyone left the business more than once. When a person returned to the trade there was disappointment on the part of the individual, family, friends and support professionals involved.
- Leaving the trade was a cumulative learning experience. Each exit attempt brought new awareness, knowledge and experience that could be applied to the next attempt to leave the street.
- To leave the trade was often riskier than staying. Issues such as survival, potential repercussions from pimps and other street personnel overcame the desire to exit.
- Almost one-half of the males interviewed left the street ten to 15 times. These males entered the trade at a younger age, left more often and stayed longer.

- While the risks and dynamics of the trade were very different for young men and young women, the motivation of survival from both historical abuse and present abuse was similar regardless of gender.

Squaring Up

- An overwhelming number of youth interviewed were prompted to leave the trade because of the violence experienced on the street.
- Women often left the trade due to pregnancy or the desire to be a mother. Over three-quarters of the women interviewed had become mothers.

Return to the Trade

- Money was a prime motivator to return to the street because without an education or skills, it often was the sole means of generating an income.
- Males returned to the trade because of the street acceptance of their plight and the abuse in their lives. Males have fewer options when leaving the street. They do not have the vision of birthing a child and they also face the stigma of men having sex with men, even if this is not their sexual preference.

Preventing a Return

- Leaving the street was challenging as the individuals faced issues of: lack of support, lack of self worth, a perception that it was too risky to exit and boredom.

Last Trick

- Many individuals said they were not sure that their last trick was or would be the last one.
- The departure from the street was a process as opposed to a specific event.

Decision Last Trick

- Enough was enough was a key reason for exiting. The catalyst to depart was the never-ending day after day experience.
- The street was viewed as short-term gain but long-term pain. No one entered the trade with a long-term plan to stay. This short-term solution became an obstacle that prevented a return to a normal life.

Assisted in Leaving

- Family or a support system was identified as important for individuals leaving the street. It provided those exiting with another identity and connection.
- The ability to meet people not involved in prostitution was important. These relationships served to counteract the desire to drift back to street friends.
- There had to be a purpose in the process of leaving the street, such as: the pursuit of a goal, having a baby, someone to trust, gaining employment or seeking a stable lifestyle.

Assisted Not Returning

- Leaving the street was a different process than not returning to the street. What assisted an individual in deciding to leave the street could be different than what assisted them in not returning to the street.
- A successful departure meant no contact or association with individuals involved in the street.
- Having someone who relied on you prevented a return to the street.
- As males grew older, they recognized the need to escape the street, to move on to other things and to find a life outside the sexual exploitation trade.
- Males have had a need to find a safe, flexible living environment to prevent a return to the street.

Turning First Trick

- The entire research population saw prostitution as something no one should do.
- Those interviewed saw their street experience of prostitution as a form of repeated abuse.

Missing the Street

- Over half of those interviewed identified money as the predominant feature missed as it provided instant independence.
- An attraction into sexual exploitation was the belief of having control to select who, where, when and what activity.
- Over half of this population were involved as children in Social Services Child Protection.
- Youth involved in the sex trade had very little training or job options.
- The camaraderie on the street provided a support network for all involved in the trade.

Almost Returned

- The likelihood of returning to the street was always a possibility even if it was a short-term solution to earn quick money.
- Money was more important to females than males as a motivator to return to the street. With over three-quarters of women in this sample having had children, financial need to support children was critical.
- Quick, non-taxable, non-traceable cash through prostitution became a solution.
- Males experienced loneliness after leaving the street. It was possible that the role and significance of childbirth for young women took care of the female need of self-fulfilment and recognition. Males did not have the opportunity to have their own personal role redefined by the birth of a child.

Steps Leaving

- Individuals were self sufficient while in the trade. While in many cases they had to hand their earnings over to their pimp, their immediate food, shelter and clothing needs were covered.
- Moving away and establishing distance from the "street supports" were important.

- Discovery and learning to live away from the street confronted each person when exiting.
- The street persona created to survive in the trade often became an impediment when accessing education, employment and rebuilding personal and family relationships.
- Personal relationships were uncharted waters for individuals who left the trade.
- Balanced, healthy relationships were foreign to this population.
- A one-day-at-a-time approach was commonplace.

Afterthoughts

- Individuals departed with both physical and emotional scars. Many interviewed had become disillusioned with their personal choices. They questioned their self-worth given their decision to enter the trade.

Thinking About the Street

- Nearly all of those interviewed believed that the street was not a positive environment.
- Eighty-four percent of those interviewed had experienced sexual abuse before the street and often this prior sexual abuse contributed to an entry onto the street.
- After exiting, individuals were frequently overcome with memories of abuse as small children and on the street. These individuals believed the street to be abusive and self-deprecating.
- In a strange way, the street protected the victims of prior sexual abuse from dealing with or resolving what they had experienced earlier in their lives. By coming to terms with the abuse on the streets, the unresolved prior sexual abuse often resurfaced.

Thoughts on Departing

- While services are provided to individuals who are on the street, there is little long-term assistance for the exiting process.

Surprise Findings upon Leaving the Street

- One-quarter of the females in the sample identified the departure as a long journey.
- Close to one-quarter of the males and females interviewed were shocked that they were able to leave and live a life beyond the street.
- Close to one-quarter of the males and females interviewed had experienced negative encounters once they left the street. They were not expecting untrusting behaviour to occur off the street.

Rituals

- Saving or hiding money, intensive cleansing and disassociation during sexual activity were identified as rituals.

Off the Street

- No one in the research population was still working in the sexual exploitation trade full-time.

Supply & Demand

A major observation from "Strolling Away" was that if the goal is to eliminate the sexual exploitation of youth involved in prostitution, then society must work towards decreasing demand for sexually exploited youth.

During the interviews, young people spoke about the continual flow of customers wanting to purchase their services. This flow often prevented and interfered with a successful exit from the trade. A need exists to alter the demand for such services.

Success has been achieved in creating awareness and prevention education for family violence, sexual abuse and assault, smoking and drinking and driving.

The only long-term solution is to design prevention materials that educate and create an understanding with adult males of all ages that **the sex trade is a form of sexual abuse.** With education, there is the possibility that males would begin to change their attitude and beliefs about this kind of activity. The framework has to be altered from "The Oldest Profession" to "The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression".

Our objective should be to decrease the demand, which in turn will lead to a decrease in the price of these services and a subsequent decrease in the availability of these services.

This premise provides a solution to eliminating the demand for the services of sexually exploited youth.

Summary of Recommendations

The last section of this research study features concluding discussions complete with related recommendations. These recommendations are influenced and guided by the previously noted highlights from the interviews.

National Research Study on Males

1. That a national research study on males involved in the sexual exploitation trade be undertaken.

Supply and Demand Equation

2. That attention is directed toward decreasing the demand for the sexual exploitation trade.

Education

Peer Education

3. That prevention information is directed towards young women and men by young people.

Public Education

4. That a national ad campaign be designed with a clear message that prostitution is a form of sexual abuse and that potential customers will be viewed as sexual abusers.

Parental Education

5. That education material is directed towards parents so they may begin to teach their children at a young age that prostitution is a form of sexual abuse.

Youth and Caregiver Education

6. That reality-based prevention materials be developed for youth and parents/caregivers.

7. That education material is designed on the process and challenges of leaving the street for youth and parents/caregivers.

Support Services

Family

8. That parent/caregiver support groups be established to support parents/caregivers whose children have just entered the trade.

Transitioning Youth

9. That a Support Team be established to assist youth when exiting the trade.

10. That all-inclusive one-stop service packages be designed for those leaving the trade.

11. That reality based re-integration materials be developed for those individuals who are attempting to re-integrate into society.

12. That a volunteer-run service support line be established for those leaving the street.

New Understanding

13. That there is professional and parental/caregiver understanding that the challenge begins once a person leaves the street.

Counselling Support

14. That ongoing counselling support is available to this population to assist them in dealing with the street abuse and prior abuse in their lives.

Social Services

15. That various street outreach programs across the country be seen as safe, exempt and neutral programs to support youth.

Harm Reduction

16. That an evaluation occurs of harm reduction approaches to working with sexually exploited youth.

Introduction

From 1991 to 1992, I researched the sexual exploitation trade in downtown Calgary. My goal was to observe and interact with this population in order to investigate the relationship of sexual abuse to a person's involvement in the trade.

With the realization that retrospective, longitudinal information on prostitution did not exist anywhere in Canada "or the world", I made the decision in the year 2000 to track as many of the original interviewees from the 1991-1992 research to determine if they were still involved in the trade or if they had exited from the street.

- Section 1 summarizes the 1991-1992 research, "The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression".
- Section 2 outlines the development of the retrospective research, "Strolling Away".
- Section 3 reviews the data analysis methodology, demographics and major findings from "Strolling Away".
- Section 4 provides an analysis of the data in the form of concluding discussions complete with related recommendations.

Section 1

The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression (1991-1992)

The Impetus of the Research

Is there a relationship between a previous history of sexual abuse and the eventual entrance into the sexual exploitation trade?

After working with young people involved in the sexual exploitation trade in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary and spending one year in an observational and interview research study in downtown Calgary in 1991, it became apparent that many of the young people working the streets had a prior background of sexual and physical abuse. My goal was to undertake research that could assist professional service providers, government and academics working with this population.

Spending an average of four evenings a week in the downtown core, I was often located in the non-profit street program Exit Van that provided support to young people involved in sexual exploitation[2](2). My research represented 50 interviews with nine young men and 41 young women and was entitled, "The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression".

Process

To assist in the interview process, I developed, in collaboration with the Youth In Care and Custody Network, an open-ended interview questionnaire. The lines of inquiry covered the following areas: demographics, family history and background, sexual abuse, violence, school experiences, running history, alcohol and drug abuse, statutory agency involvement, working life, physical and mental health concerns, and antecedents and contributing factors leading to prostitution.

Methodology

I used Grounded Theory and Feminist research principles in the research.

> "I used the combined inductive approach of Grounded Theory and a Feminist methodology to be complementary. Grounded Theory allowed the opportunity for immersion into the sex worker's life, and the feminist methodology insisted upon face to face interviews and recognized that this would have a direct impact upon the researcher."(McIntyre, 1994:6)

Snowball sampling was also used. Of the 50 young people interviewed, 41 were females and nine males.

To ensure comfort, safety and confidentiality, interviews occurred in the subject's homes, my office or after hours at the Exit Community Outreach Program office. The interviews lasted anywhere from two to seven hours and were taped and transcribed. To ensure confidentiality in the research report, in most cases pseudonyms were assigned to the interview subjects.

[2] Exit Community Outreach is a program managed by Woods Homes of Calgary.

Respondents' Characteristics

- 82% female, 12% male.
- 26% were of Aboriginal descent.
- 60% were involved with Social Services Child Protection.
- 84% had "runaway" overnight before street involvement.
- 76% entered the sexual exploitation trade prior to age 16.
- 86% entered the sexual exploitation trade prior to age 18.
- 78% of the females reported sexual abuse prior to entrance into the sexual exploitation trade.
- 100% of the males reported sexual abuse prior to entrance into the sexual exploitation trade.
- 75% of females reported physical abuse prior to entrance into the sexual exploitation trade.
- 55% of males reported physical abuse prior to entrance into the sexual exploitation trade.

Policy Implications

Part of the research objectives was to determine the level of responsibility within Calgary's professional community for dealing with youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. A total of 255 questionnaires were distributed to police, judges, municipal politicians, teachers, social workers, youth workers and therapists. With a response rate of 43%, the survey revealed that no service or department took responsibility for this population.

> "It would seem that the Calgary professional community is clear as to what the needs of this population are; the crucial question is who should be delivering them and how to develop and educate those clients and professionals about the services. It would be safe to conclude that no clear mandate exists within Calgary's professional community in reference to sex work." (McIntyre, 1994:128)

As a result of this research, a City of Calgary Municipal Task Force was established in 1995. Co-chaired by Alderman Bev Longstaff and myself, this Task Force took the needed first step in recognizing that child prostitution was a form of child sexual abuse and ultimately, changing a culture that historically saw youth involved in prostitution as criminals. They were now seen as **victims of sexual abuse**, many with histories of sexual abuse prior to their street involvement.

A 1998 Alberta Task Force chaired by a Member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, Heather Forsyth, implemented legislative changes to the Child Welfare Act to include prostitution as a form of sexual abuse. This was the beginning of ensuring that youth involved in prostitution stayed on the agenda of government and the general public. In 1999, the Alberta Government's often controversial "*Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act*" (PCHIP) was enacted and amended following a constitutional challenge.

Program Implications

Corresponding with the legislative changes were program changes. Programs for this population such as Outreach Street Services, were set up across all provinces and territories in Canada within the last five years.

Section 2

Strolling Away (2000-2001)

The Motivation to Do the Research

"Why did you want to know so much about our lives when they were going lousy and now that they are going good you ask us nothing?"

I had established a long-term connection with four of the original 50 interview subjects, as I had known these individuals well before their entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. In 1999, I was asked by one of these individuals why so much interest was expressed during her years of involvement in the sexual exploitation trade but no interest beyond that point in her life.

This challenge raised many questions. What happened to the original 50 interview subjects? Were they still on the street? Were they still alive? Were they helped? Could they have been helped sooner or even prevented from entering the street? As these individuals faced transition and personal challenges in their lives, I wondered if the programs and services were providing assistance.

No Longitudinal Research

> "Why do we spend so much energy understanding how people enter deviancy and no time understanding how they leave?" (Paul Wiles, Director of Research for the British Government Home Office, January 2000)

With no longitudinal research on the population involved in the sexual exploitation trade, the time was right to conduct a ten-year retrospective study. The 1991-1992 consent forms provided permission to contact these individuals for future research and the original transcribed interviews were still available.

Methodology

As with "The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression", the interview subjects provided suggestions and comments on the design, content and sequence of the lines of inquiry. The questions were designed to answer the following:

- If someone exits the street, when and how is it done?
- Could they exit the street earlier than the "norm"?
- What services and support are required to exit and stay off the street?

Grounded Theory and Feminist research principles were once again utilized. The qualitative interviews were taped and transcribed. In order to facilitate the analysis, the interviews were dissected into common patterns of response and then placed in quantitative responses. See Appendix 1 for tables and responses.

Tracking

A strategic tracking approach was developed for each of the original 50 interviewees. The goal was to account for as many individuals as possible but within the guideline to not disrupt anyone's life. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary's Social Issues Committee served as an advisory body for guidance and contact assistance.

An extensive review occurred of each of the 50 interviews on file. Notes were made of the history of each person as well as the last contact information. Contact occurred in a number of ways that included:

- Direct contact
- Direct contact by others acting on my behalf
- Internet research
- Mail or phone contact with never a direct reference to the topic of sexual exploitation

Individuals were provided the opportunity to contact me by phone, fax, email or mail.

Seeking the original participants from the original research was thought to be an onerous task. Establishing long-term relationships was not the purpose of the original research and nearly ten years had passed since the original participants were interviewed. It was suggested that the potential existed for 20-30% of the original population to be located. However, 78% of the original population (39 of 50) were found. Twenty-eight of the 39 agreed to be interviewed. An additional ten persons who were involved in the sexual exploitation trade as adolescents, were interviewed on the process of exiting the trade. A total of 33 females and five males were interviewed.

Interviews

Once contact was established, individuals were asked if they would like to participate in this retrospective research study. If in agreement, interviews occurred in neutral locations, as many of the interview subjects had no desire to openly share this experience with their children or significant other. In addition, long distance phone interviews took place with participants in Halifax, Montreal and St. Catharines.

Interviews typically lasted from one to four hours. It became evident that the interview was a cathartic experience for the individual, as it often provided an opportunity for a sense of closure on these difficult times. To ensure confidentiality in the research report, in most cases pseudonyms were assigned to the interview subjects.

Interdisciplinary Team

It was decided to approach the data analysis in a unique manner by bringing together an interdisciplinary team. Ten individuals from across Canada assembled for one week in Calgary to discuss and debate the trends, themes and life processes of those involved in the research. The team was evenly divided by gender and ranged in age from 25 to 55 years of age. All signed confidentiality agreements, and the names and other vital information were changed to protect those interviewed.

The team was comprised of individuals from the corporate, entrepreneurial, government, and non-profit sectors plus two individuals who were part of the research and had Youth In Care and Custody Network backgrounds. The degree of knowledge ranged from general to those who worked with sexual exploited street youth. Team members received condensed versions of the transcribed interviews as a tool to encourage discussion in reference to certain themes that occurred in the materials. This provided me with a vast range of perspectives and challenged many ingrained thoughts in working with this population. One team member from the corporate community challenged us to repeatedly admire, respect and always remember the resiliency of this population.

> "It was truly an educational experience to be part of such an eclectic group of people. Despite the differences in our professional and personal lives, we were bound by the common goal to stop the sexual exploitation of our youth."
> (Fran Peeples, Interdisciplinary Team member, June 2001)

Section 3

Strolling Away Major Findings

Strolling Away 2000-2001

The following represents the background findings of those interviewed from "Strolling Away":

- **The average age of entrance into the sexual exploitation trade was 14 years**.
- **Males entered the trade on average at the age of 12 and females entered at age 15.**
- **A total of 260 years of street sexual exploitation was recorded**. Females averaged six years on the street, while males averaged 12 years.
- **84% of the population** had a **background of sexual abuse** and **79% a background of physical abuse** prior to the street.
- 82% of females had a background of sexual abuse and 78% experienced physical abuse. **All the males in this research experienced sexual and physical abuse** prior to the street.
- 60% of the population, regardless of gender, ended up in the care of the Child Protection Services in various provincial governments. This meant that Social Services were contacted at some point in the early years.
- **A total of 26% of those interviewed were of Aboriginal heritage**. Twenty-four percent of females had Aboriginal backgrounds. A total of 40% of males were Aboriginal.

1 Leaving the Trade

There is a belief that once a person has decided to leave the trade, he or she exits for good.

However, while it is assumed that leaving is a simple process, this research indicated that **everyone left this business more than once.**

> "More than ten times. Ya just go crazy. Ah, home life. That's why I kept leaving. I tried to go back home, but I couldn't stay... it was a lot easier to live on the streets than it was to live at home." (Andrea)

> "The reality of the situation was the street of Vancouver was better than what I was facing home. You know and but you need money you know what's a boy to do, you

> know I mean really when you're 13 years old you can't like get a job anywhere and you can't go back home." (Matthew)

When a person returned to the trade, there was disappointment for the individual, family, friends and support professionals involved.

> "I just couldn't face myself each day looking in the mirror, continuing to say, well you did this last night, or you did that the night before or are you going to do it again tomorrow night." (Mark)

Individuals who exited the trade learned quickly that **leaving was actually a cumulative learning experience.** Each exit attempt brought new awareness, knowledge and experience that could be applied to their next attempt to exit the street.

> "There is going to be a lot of pain and hard work, and it's a long journey and looking at themselves. It's not an easy one. People think that you just leave the street and that's it. And that's not the way it is." (Tamara)

To exit and then return to the trade is to understand that the entire lives of these individuals had revolved around the street. Their survival, social activity and support sources existed in the trade. Attachments and connections to the street were interrupted or severed during times of exiting and finding replacement attachments or connections was not easy. Few attachments and connections still existed given an individual's absence from the traditional support of family, friends and community.

During the interviews, it became clear that **leaving was often riskier than staying.** Questions such as survival, potential repercussions from pimps and other street personnel overcame the desire to exit. Typical concerns for those attempting to exit were: Where will they go? Where will they live? How will they earn money? Who will support them? What will they do? Who can they trust? Who can they tell that they are leaving? What if someone recognizes them or knows where they have been?

There was a significant difference between the numbers of times males left the streets when compared to females. Males generally **entered the trade at a younger age, left more often and stayed longer**. Close to half of the males interviewed left the street ten to 15 times.

> "Over 1000 easy, and then I found myself three days later doing it again. So it's a survival thing you get forced to being there." Well, you're not forced to be there, however, your circumstances that lead you to being there, you always end up winding up back there." (Luke)

I would argue that the search for sexual identity as described in "*This Idle Trade*" by Visano (1987) and "*M is for Mutual A is for Acts*" by Allman (1999), was not the major driver of males into the sexual exploitation trade. I believe that entrance into the sexual exploitation trade was not a mechanism or procedure to define an individual's sexual preference.

All males in my two studies identified a previous physical and sexual abuse background. Social Services agencies appear to be more comfortable and accepting of young women with a background of abuse entering the sexual exploitation trade. There is not only a sense of reluctance to work with the male population there is also an underlying impression that males are searching out their sexual preference. Regardless of sexual preference, the street is sexual exploitation which is a form of sexual abuse. The dynamics of survival from abuse influence both young women and men. While the risks and the dynamics of the trade were very different for young men and young women, **the motivation of survival from historical abuse and the response to the present abuse was similar regardless of gender**.

> "Do you really have to do this, surely there's got to be some other bloody way. ...You know you really have the concept of having to earn a normal living and paying the bills. They're given a large sum of money and, for doing what at first seems the undoable and then the more money you keep getting, the more and more it just becomes an act. You, you lose a sense of intimacy and you want to try and find yourself again and, I mean, you lose something in yourself again and I mean yourself. There's no other way to put it and the only way you can hope to find it back is by leaving." (Mark)

2 Squaring Up

Rarely has the time been taken to understand what motivates people to leave the trade. "Strolling Away" revealed that an **overwhelming number were prompted to leave because of the violence experienced on the street**.

> "I think every bad date is like 'I'm not going back,' but you go back the next day." (Liz)

A total of 82% of those interviewed in 1991-1992 reported violence by customers. This included bad dates and the continual fear of being murdered.

> "He took me to Stanley Park. Had a gun, ya know to my head and I thought I was dead." (Cherry)

The high degree of fear of violence and the resulting pressure women felt to leave the street were based on the fact that women are the predominant gender of sexual exploitation murders in Canada.

Data produced by Statistics Canada revealed that customers could often be violent with prostitutes. A total of 63 prostitutes were murdered in Canada from 1991 to 1995, of which 60 were female and seven were less than 18 years of age.[3]

In comparison, male victimization occurred typically by an unknown third party, i.e. gay bashing.

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[3] Cf. Duchesne, Doreen, 1997 "Street Prostitution in Canada" Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.Vol.17, No. 2.

> "When you're dealing with women, they are the ones that have to fear their dates. When you're dealing with the guys, it's not the dates the guys fear, it never is. The ones that they really fear are the guys who come down there onto the stroll, like you'll have four or five of them suddenly jump out of the car. Those are the guys, that you hope somebody's nearby." (Mark)

Of those interviewed one-quarter identified stress and pressure as another motivator to square up. The street life brought with it a sense of being fed up of having had enough stress and pressure. No one saw this as an enjoyable lifestyle.

Some of those who left the trade saw family pride and self-esteem as motivators to square up.

> "Well family was a big one because I was working downtown Vancouver and my family lived in Vancouver, so there was always the threat of being seen by family. Always, that was always there. But the other one was, the stripping away of your personal identity over the period of a year and I've always said this about prostitution, and that people that have been there need to get out and the people who don't, I really believe strongly that you have to have a sense of who you are as a person prior to, to know that that's disappearing." (Patricia)

This research also determined that **women often left the trade due to pregnancy or due to a desire to be a mother.** As men from the street rarely had a parental responsibility there was less motivation to leave, which may explain why males stayed in the trade longer.

> "I guess it was finding out I was pregnant, that I would be a mom. I didn't think I had it in me. I thought I was too into me to do anything for anybody else. And then, I had her, I changed, I was a completely different person in a matter of hours. I swear, it was and then she became my focus." (Melissa)

The research established that well over three-quarters of the women interviewed had become mothers. Having a child or the desire to have a child became a critical influence in their decision to leave the business and not return. It created the option to consider alternatives and provided a vision of a life outside of the street. While not all women that birthed children immediately left the trade, **women did not want to remain in the sexual exploitation trade in the role of a mother.**

> "When I knew I was going to have a baby... I didn't want him to grow up in an atmosphere that included abuse like my world did when I was a little kid. I wanted to make something different for my children. You know, I couldn't be a hooker, I couldn't be a dope addict, I couldn't be a dope pusher, I had to be a mom." (Katlyn)

3 Return to the Trade

A significant number of those in the research identified money as a prime motivator to return to the street.

> "Money, thinking really that I wasn't worth anything different than being down there. Um, not having the skills to stay away. Like not having the education to get a job to support myself." (Katlyn)

Close to one-quarter of females felt pressured by a peer or someone else in the trade to return. While males were not pressured by pimps to return to the street, over two-thirds of the males felt compelled to return to the trade given the non-judgmental environment of the street.

> "The knowing, going anywhere and people knowing you, I miss that. Ya know, you walk downtown, only get one block, and ten people are talking to you and I guess being the centre of attention. Not quite the centre of attention, but everybody knows who you are, so whenever you pass through, for a brief moment, you do shine. I miss that and I don't miss anything else really." (Luke)

Regardless if they were homosexual, bi-sexual or heterosexual, **males returned to the trade because of the street acceptance of their plight and to the abuse in their lives.**

> "Like okay, I say I'm gay for the play and for the pay. Okay, well I do, I'm gay for the pay you know what I mean." (Luke)

> "I too often found instances of, eh I had burned, I felt I had burned every bridge that I possibly had so I didn't think I had any options. I figured well I've used this program, I've tried that and I've tried this and I've gone to see this person and I've gone to see this person. And it always seemed like every single thing that I tried for years, it seemed like no matter how you try, everything would somehow fail. Everything, just as soon as you're about to succeed, as soon as you want to get out of there, get onto something new, it comes back to you again where you suddenly forced into the position again. So either some piece of history comes up and you have to deal with it one way or another. Or else you now have some new problem that has to be dealt with or that doesn't get dealt with, maybe I won't be here tomorrow." (Mark)

4 Preventing a Return

All individuals found the process of leaving the street challenging. **Common issues were lack of support, lack of self-worth, high risks and boredom.**

Respondents identified the need for stronger support services as a key factor in preventing a return to the street.

> "Getting a job. Like um, more things available to us, so that when we get off the street that we can get education or you need help in certain things, so we wouldn't have to go back, because we would have a better job. Schooling basically, where we could get funding." (Annie)

Others identified the need for improved self-worth as important.

> "Self-worth, self-worth was a big one you're just feeling like so you're not you can't say cheap you ain't. It's not cheap, but it's just so used. Used and discarded and um, like I can really see how the fashion models, you know and then they're nothing. It's pretty, pretty devastating. You're working here and like well, what can you do besides give a good blow job ya know, so." (Felicia)

Some felt that they had limited options available to them to earn money. Others identified leaving the trade as very risky. Their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and entertainment were taken care of in the street trade. Upon departure none of these needs were covered. The street provided a predictable environment and this was not available after leaving the street.

> "It was familiarity and a bond as strange as it sounds, but familiarity and a bond that we just felt safe, we knew what was gonna happen. We knew what was gonna happen, what was expected, what the role was. How we were supposed to act and I could get right into that...you don't have much else or other options, that where you go." (Felicia)

The issue of boredom was identified as a challenge when departing the trade. The street trade had become all encompassing in their lives. In contrast, the square world did not offer them recognition or familiarity.

> "Um, I was bored. ...I missed the money, I missed, um, my friends cause I didn't have any friends, I was lonely." (Shelly)

While many participants identified having some support in the transition of leaving the street, often it was not enough. As it was a full-time job to support someone in such a major life transition, it required more than one person to provide assistance.

> "... had the system been more able to accommodate, different types of kids instead of throwing all the kids into one sort of idea of what should happen. Different types of programs..." (Wyonna)

> "For going back, if there was somewhere else to go besides, um having to live with another family. Um, having to ya know it would've been a lot easier if I had a place to go like a big house with a lot of other people my age and without so many people telling me what to do all the time and everything that I did do something was always wrong." (Andrea)

5 Last Trick

Many individuals said they were not sure that **their last trick would be the final one**. All individuals described in extensive detail their first trick, including where, who, how much money they made and on what they spent the money. In some cases the first trick had occurred eight years ago, yet the recollection of it stayed ingrained.

> "And I talked to the first guy that I ever took out, I went to his house. He came into my shop a few months ago, and I was being evaluated by the manager about his prescription." (Nicky)

However, there was a lack of clarity and detail of their last trick. Some people even confused the year and city of their last date.

> "I never find it's your last trick. Even if you quit prostituting for seven years, it's never your last trick. Cause if you need the money, diapers for your child, medication for yourself, you'll go out and turn a trick." (Lucy)

Many saw **their departure from the street as a process** as opposed to a specific event. Most males believed there had to be a commitment to the process of leaving.

> "...you have to prepare yourself mentally to know what you're leaving behind...you have to mentally prepare yourself so that you...have less chance of relapsing." (Luke)

This was very different from a traditional lifestyle addiction. Alcoholics and/or drug addicts remember the date, time, location, substance and details of events which led to their final departure from this activity.

For individuals exiting the trade they often left the trade mentally long before the actual date and time of physical departure.

> "Well I couldn't stand to be nice to them any more. I couldn't stand to look at them or talk to them or I just couldn't stand them at all no matter how nice they were, you know how clean and didn't smell, anything. Like it didn't matter who they were, I just could not stand the act of having to deal with somebody." (Allison)

6 Decision Last Trick

Being on the street is a hard lifestyle. There is no personal dignity and it eliminates the normal pleasures of life. However, there is a certain edge of excitement or "pump" that surrounds street life. In a different way individuals enjoyed the pump of the street as it served as a stimulant to the activity on the street.

> "Money thinking really that I wasn't worth anything different than being down there. Um, not having the skills to stay away. Like not having the education to get a job to support myself. Probably my addictions led me back there as well. And being attracted to the scenes, the party atmosphere. But mainly money I think. Only because I didn't have any other resources to support myself with." (Katlyn)

For one-third of those interviewed the decision to make the last trick seemed to be based on a series of events or incidents. The catalyst was the never-ending day after day experience – **enough was enough.**

> "Had enough...well, I got sick and tired of the street having control over me and having to rely on the tricks so I could go home and get high. And then when I got high, I didn't enjoy it anymore. I got really sick and tired of, like the shit that I went through then I went home and got high. And eh, it's a merry-go-round." (Jane)

> "And I was getting sick of abusing my body and I felt that maybe I was worth a little more than $50.00." (Beth)

A significant number identified a new person(s) or relationship in their lives that provided them with alternatives. They had an opportunity to attach into a different life.

> "Then I met him, ya and we took it real slow at first but I sort of knew that this was different and ya know maybe it was just that I was open to the possibility at that moment. Ya know, I don't know. But anyway that was it I haven't done it since." (Matthew)

> "I think it was. I just didn't want to do it no more. I had a good boyfriend. I wanted to settle down and I didn't mess things up anymore, it was to hard on us." (Jessica)

Paranoia and fear edged one-fifth of those interviewed to their last trick.

> "A lot of times it was fear of the guys I was with because I seem to have this attraction to psychotic men." (Kelly)

> "I think just, well I was going to die. I was at the point of dying." (Lorna)

The collective effect of abuse, drugs and danger built up until an individual reached his or her limit. Similar to my first research, no one entered the sexual exploitation trade with a long-term plan of staying. "Strolling Away" also revealed that the street was viewed as **short-term gain but long-term pain**. However, this short-term solution became an obstacle that prevented a return to normal lives. In fact, some believed that they would never experience normalcy.

> "I don't know how to be a normal person. And I had to learn all over, it's like someone losing the feelings in their legs and getting them back and learning how to walk again." (Jessica)

> "So it's scary to know that when I was 12, that I actually made a decision in my life that changed my life forever. And to be able to consciously now look back and know that. I would go back and make a different decision, I would by far." (Luke)

7 Assisted in Leaving Street

Many of the interviews identified family or a support system as important when attempting to leave the street. It provided those exiting with another identity and connection.

> "My parents always helped me out. I think the biggest thing is that you need, if you want to leave, you need a support system." (Melissa)

> "Cuz ya don't ya know I don't really have anybody to lean on, like my mom, no thank you like I won't even go there." (Beth)

However, parental and other support systems and overall family and support relationships were often stressed and damaged during the street activity time.

Another key influence was the importance of the **ability to meet square, non-involved street people**. These relationships served to counteract the desire to drift back to street friends.

> "You know, so I think, had I developed any kind of outside friendships and anybody had even spoken to me to influence me to leave, um, I would have taken that. " (Kathleen)

> "I met like family people and everything. I think a lot of it was just me. I didn't want to stop, I met new people and I did different things, and I didn't see people getting stabbed or beat up all the time, and hurt or drugs, or it was a change and I liked it..." (Melissa)

"Strolling Away" determined there had to be **a purpose in the process of leaving the street** such as: the pursuit of goals, having a baby, trusting someone, gaining employment or seeking a stable lifestyle.

> "You know, going back and getting an education, dealing with my issues, you know healing the things that got me on the street in the first place. Dealing with my sexual abuse issues, um, abstaining from drugs and alcohol, you know admitting that there was a problem and that it was within me. You know it wasn't just, you know a cool or fun thing to be, but I was pretty messed up and that's why I thought that prostitution was okay for me." (Katlyn)

8 Assisted Not Returning

Leaving the street is a different process than not returning to the street. "Strolling Away" identified that what assisted an individual in deciding to leave the street could be different than what assisted them in not returning to the street. As the needs of the individual changed, the initial supports required when leaving were not important after the departure.

Once an individual left the street, they searched for reasons to stay away. Exiting the trade often occurred in a secretive, clandestine format. Given the enigmatic nature of the departure, there was often no opportunity to have a planned exit in place.

> "Um, it wasn't really a decision, it just happened." (Rita)

Women who were pregnant would be the only exception to this statement. Pregnancy served as a catalyst to exiting the trade in a planned fashion. The potential of being pregnant on the street provided the impetus to plan a departure from the street trade.

People who left the street for the first time would frequently make a "never return" statement. Nevertheless, as the research revealed, most people left the street more than once if not numerous times.

A successful departure meant no contact or association with individuals involved in the street.

> "Like I needed a safe place to go where nobody could find me and drag me back, cause I had tried to leave within another network. Like I tried to leave my pimp by staying with another prostitute. She turned me back over to it anyway. So I knew it had to be in a different area, someplace where I had never been before. Like it had to be the square straight world that I was totally afraid of, but I was also fed up and it didn't matter that I was afraid." (Katlyn)

The drift back factor was often easier if there was access to people still involved in the street. Exiting a specific city or part of the city was also common.

> "But it perpetrates energy, negative energy and ah, collectively, sucks you in whether it's the tricks or the other women or the men or the stupid ones who drive around and throw pennies and annoy you. All of it, it's just like a big fucking hole that you lose yourself in. It's almost like reprogramming." (Felicia)

> "I missed my friends cause I didn't have any friends, I was lonely. ...I think it was just because I wasn't used to square people."(Shelly)

Close to one-quarter identified **having someone relying on you** as a critical feature in preventing both males and females return to the street.

> "Um when I got home and I looked at my baby girl, and she was looking at me. And it was just like, this little helpless thing is looking at me, and I'm going "Oh you know I belong to her". You know she could grow up without a mommy. And you know I didn't really have a mom when I was younger, so I want her to have a mom." (Shelly)

Males saw **maturity** as a strong influence to depart and not return to the street. Fourteen percent of females identified having a **vision** as a key factor in not returning. Having something to work towards eliminated the pump or excitement associated with being on the street.

Seventeen percent of the males identified the need **to find a safe, flexible living environment to prevent a return to the street**. Males are less likely to receive social service support. Males leaving the street are not leaving to birth children so this decreases the likelihood of state and parental support. The trade often provides a viable solution to homelessness for males. Males need to find housing and employment independent of the state and some have succeeded at this.

> "... like I never had to worry anymore about really, truly, honestly, being destitute you know what I mean there is a difference between not having enough money to go out with your friends on Friday night or, or not having enough money to buy the groceries at the grocery store. You know there's a difference between that and seriously being destitute." (Matthew)

> "To keep off, cuz here I am again. I lost the family support that I thought I had. I still get social assistance so I have like a guaranteed roof, which is good, it's not like I'm living on the streets. And I'm using my money to get a hotel room or stuff like that. I am, I'm ah using the street as a survival technique is what I was taught at a young age and ya know, I ah just don't get taken advantage of." (Luke)

Eighty-five percent of Calgary's Drop In Centre homeless clients are males. Executive Director, Dermott Baldwin states, " If a woman enters the shelter, we are often able to provide alternate services within four hours. This time is significantly reduced if children are involved."

Given that well over three-quarters of the females from this sample had birthed children this provided them with increased opportunities. Families were more likely to support them. Government support is more readily available to young mothers and is often not an option for males.

9 Turning First Trick

In " The Youngest Profession – The Oldest Oppression," the majority of the interviewees shared concern about anyone becoming involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Ten years later, the entire research population of "Strolling Away" did **not see prostitution as something anyone should choose**.

> "Don't bother. Cause it's not worth it. You want to do it one time, you think it's all great and stuff, and you just keep going and going, and you get caught up in it and you think you won't go back. You'll just keep going back. You get sidetracked and it's hard to get out." (Annie)

> "Don't do it, well it's not as simple as that I mean you know I try to think back to where I was when, you know, I mean what my state was when I pulled my very first

> trick, you know what I mean. It would not have mattered what anybody said to me you know like your circumstances you know. Cause, I ran away from home because my stepfather was abusing me, not sexually but he was a physically abusive man and my mother was far too much of a coward to stand up to him, you know and things had come to an impasse and I had made threats that I would leave if he ever did this or that, and then he did this or that, and I felt like I had to live up to my threats so I ran from home." (Matthew)

The negative view of the sexual exploitation trade still existed for this population even though many had been off the street for a number of years. It appeared that the dislike and concern for this activity was permanent. Often those individuals who had been away from the street for a longer period of time had the strongest reaction to those turning their first trick.

> "I try to convince them all the reasons not to. I would want to find out, I would want to investigate and find out why they are there. Cause there is so many different factors involved. I would tell them in the long run that they weren't really going to get ahead. That it would make them regret it." (Sandra)

Those interviewed saw their street experience of prostitution as a form of **repeated abuse**. A total of 84% of those interviewed had been sexually abused prior to their involvement on the street. Many of those entering the sexual exploitation trade had unresolved issues of their earlier sexual abuse. Often the unresolved historical abuse became more distant than the abuse they experienced in the trade. Once an individual leaves the street, a need exists to resolve the street and the initial sexual abuse issues.

> "...you don't have to abuse yourself like that just because somebody abused you first. And, I don't know but it's so hard when I know what I was like and I know how many years it took me to convince myself that I was worth more than allowing me to use me as a doormat." (Katlyn)

10 Missing the Street

One-third of the respondents identified **money as the predominant feature missed**.

> "I guess I'd have to say money, even though I never really seen a lot of that money, but just the money I guess I did have was a security thing to help myself feel better." (Sandra)

> "The money, the party life, I don't know, the non-responsibility like the fact that you just do what you want when you want to do it, or you know. Um, the freedom I suppose. That kinda false sense of freedom that you get down there that you live in the sub-culture that divides all rules for whatever, I kinda miss that sometimes." (Katlyn)

An attraction into street sexual exploitation was **the belief of having the control** to select who, where, when and what activity. Fifteen percent cited the adrenaline, pump or control as elements that they missed from the street.

> "I miss staying out all night and partying. I miss the power I'd have over the tricks and my, you know, being in control." (Shelly)

Previously, many of these individuals were non-consenting victims of abuse but on the street it meant instant financial gratification for the same activity.

> "The power over and the men giving me the money and the fake attention and stuff was a power for me." (Tamara)

Well over half of this population were involved in Social Services Child Protection and on the street they experienced a sense of control that was previously unknown to them.

> "We can see how for youth in care of the government which is time limited, this can work as a bridging into adulthood. In many ways it gives them the opportunity to have their first chance at employment and independence." (McIntyre 1994:169)

Young people who moved to adulthood through their street experiences had **very little training or options on which to fall back.** The effort to move away often became both challenging and somewhat boring as their personal and professional options were limited.

The traditional predictable nature of everyday life was not an easy change. However, "Strolling Away" identified some bonuses associated with street life. Money was at the top of the list as it provided **instant independence.** Even if they were not fully in charge of or in control of the money, they still had the ability to generate funds.

> "Like that is the, like so the bored piece, the excitement, that was all there. But the bottom line was I did it for the money right. Like I did need to pay my rent, um, I needed to be able to be dressed. Um, so like having a stable income, like having to fight my social worker for everything." (Harry)

Males missed the freedom of the street once they left. While many entered minimum wage labour work because it did not require training, the work offered very little independence in their life.

> "I miss being spontaneous, I miss the adventure." (Matthew)

Both males and females missed the camaraderie. **Camaraderie on the street provided a support network.** Street activity created an informal support group for all involved in the trade.

> "... cause there was a family kind of...It was a familiarity and a bond as strange as that sounds, but a familiarity and a bond that we just felt safe we knew what was

> goanna happen...How we were supposed to act and I could get right into that so long." (Felicia)

> "Um, I don't know, I guess in a lot of ways it was like a family, like a big family. And you know, it seems really bad, but in a lot of ways we were always really supportive of everyone, you know, they kept you safe and that. A lot of times you don't get that at home." (Melissa)

When a woman left the street her time in the trade became history fairly quickly, albeit often hidden and forgotten. Given that young women often married and had children, people were not inclined to identify them as former street workers.

Conversely, males were not as likely to forget this behaviour. "Even if the young man who ended up on the street saw himself as gay, his involvement in the trade was not forgotten", said Kevin Midbo, Executive Director, AIDS Calgary. "No one forgot this activity and often identified a young man as a former street worker."

11 Almost Returned

Once a person left the street, the **likelihood of returning** was always a possibility – even if it was only a **short-term solution**. Many individuals believed that if they returned to the street for just a few days they could make some quick money. However, street culture was all consuming and within a short period of time, an individual out for a quick solution, became ingrained in the culture. The belief in this short-term solution addressed the number of times people left the street.

> "I had no money I guess. Um, more, if I'd had more self respect ya know like I didn't really have a lot of, well I don't know cuz I want to say I didn't really have a lot of awareness of how it would damage me in the long term, which it has ya know. But it don't sound true when I say that now based on what I said when I was 18, you know cuz I obviously knew back then it was going to damage me." (Matthew)

Most of us have the resources available for quick income, whether it is to drive a taxi, work overtime, contract work, or financial assistance from family and friends. This research population was accustomed to instant cash and waiting for paycheques or loan approval was not only unfamiliar but also tedious. These individuals were often unable or unwilling to once again access cash from family or friends. Their street experience had taught them a form of independence and they felt embarrassed to ask their family or friends to assist them.

> "When you, when you have no money and you're on the streets, it was a lot easier to go back. You know what you were doing, it was an easy way to get money." (Jessica)

Money was more important to females than males as a motivator to return to the street. With well over three-quarters of women in this sample having had children, financial need to support children was critical. Minimum wage employment combined with day care costs meant being below the average of the working poor. While social assistance provided some

financial support, it limited the opportunity to earn additional money. If more money was earned, it had to be claimed and the assistance allowance was decreased. Returning to the street offered an instant solution without government financial sanction. **Quick, non-taxable, non-traceable cash became a solution.**

> "With three kids I just want my kids to have not everything but to have, you know, I don't want them known as being on welfare with kids, so. Like being in drama right now, he is in cubs, you know, as well as ... Welfare sure doesn't pay for that." (Karen)

Given the early age of entrance into the sexual exploitation trade it was clear that young women did not have employment skills. Applying for, maintaining and earning a reasonable wage was not within their grasp at this point. Women had the added stress of providing for their children.

Young males were more likely to have the opportunity to earn and had the flexibility to attain work in a number of settings. Casual unskilled physical labour was easy to acquire for the male population whereas female casual labour, such as being a waitress, often required experience and training.

It was more common for the male population to experience **loneliness**. It was possible that the role and significance of childbirth for young women took care of the female need of self-fulfilment and recognition. Males did not have the opportunity to have their own personal role redefined by the birth of a child. While in a position to father a child, the male's role was somewhat limited and removed if on the street.

> "Like so what brought me back? I think it was, so if I tried to mix with mainstream folks, but it just wasn't happening you know what I mean? Playing around in somebody's basement playing hockey, like air hockey, or playing cops and robbers for real seemed to be a lot more exciting to me." (Harry)

12 Steps Leaving

Many individuals who left the street were surprised at the difficulty and length of the exiting process. In the trade these individuals were **self-sufficient**. While in many cases females had to hand their earnings to "their man (pimp)," their immediate food, shelter and clothing needs were covered.

As males don't have pimps, they often shared their earnings/money with their friends or supplied the cash for parties. Males do not work as long hours or as often as women. They tend to work for the cash to party or to pay for other needs. Once that money has been earned they stop working for that day.

> "I'd rather smoke pot or do mushrooms, and so any money I got went to booze or to pay rent, or food or whatever. Just hanging out. So at that point it was just really lifestyle." (Harry)

However, once an individual exited the trade, they were fully dependent on family, friends or society to achieve their basic needs. This dependency was a humbling experience.

> "It surprised me that I could humble myself to take a bus. That was the ultimate shocker. That was my biggest shocker. Seriously. And the job really surprised me, that I got a regular office job. That blew me away. I was able to do it and do it well." (Samantha)

As mentioned earlier, moving away and establishing a distance from their "street supports" was important. Both males and females viewed **distance as important in the separation**.

> "The company I was keeping. My boyfriend at the time, his best friend was dating a dancer, so I was sort of getting back into, with those people. Of course, I was starting to go out to the bars again and I started associating with his friends." (Sandra)

Reconnection to family was very important. Females were more likely to remain connected with their families. The "homophobic' reaction towards males in the sexual exploitation trade often created distance from family of origin and supports. Males tended to be transient in their working locations. All the males in this sample had been involved in the sexual exploitation trade in at least three city centres. The fear of recognition haunted both genders so movement provided a recognition protection mechanism.

Rediscovering self and determination were important exiting factors for one-third of the female population in the research. This rediscovery was often the impetus for self-discovery. Entering the sexual exploitation trade at an average age of 15 years resulted in limited self-discovery and awareness. **Discovery and learning** to live confronted each person when they exited.

> "I had to get up in the morning and look at myself as a person, not an object. I had to get drug counseling, and sexual assault counseling. I had to get in touch with myself. I had to do things that I never thought I could do, like, um, admit that I am a drug addict, admit that I'm addicted to money, and drugs and everything else. I had to surrender." (Shelly)

> "How to stay away from the people probably...how to budget... And then how to keep myself entertained."(Rita)

To survive in the sexual exploitation trade, an individual had to develop a "street persona" – a personality that could endure in the street. Leaving the street did not always mean leaving the street persona behind. The street persona was tough and spirited as these were necessary traits for survival. When exiting, **this street persona often became an impediment** when these individuals accessed education, employment and rebuilt personal and family relationships.

> "And coming off the streets and trying to go into a regular high school where, I wasn't still doing that stuff but I hadn't gotten rid of my hitting and punching people or you know jumping, not jump jumping on people in a sexual way, but jumping on people and saying really inappropriate stuff." (Helen)

After exiting, the feisty street survival nature often appeared in relationships. Previous relationship experience was based on negotiations with pimps, customers, police, social service agencies and other street workers. Once these individuals left the trade and established **personal relationships they entered uncharted waters**. Their experience with the mainstream world that was outside prostitution was limited.

> "That I'm not, um, well one that I wasn't better than everybody else. Because, and I know that sounds weird and you wouldn't think that being a hoe, but you make yourself believe that your different, because you're almost super-human. So, I had to look at things differently, um, and that was a big challenge for me, and not like, I said, not separate myself from square and live." (Allison)

Again, given the young age of entrance into the trade, relationship experience was minimal. With a history of sexual abuse this research population entered the trade through a relationship with an individual who was looking to benefit from their exploitation. **Balanced, healthy relationships were foreign to this population.**

> "Yeah, I can laugh and joke, I can sit down and watch a movie now. And like it was a whole different world for me to be able to sit down, and actually cook a home cooked meal with me and my husband and sit at the kitchen table and eat. Instead of going out and eating fast food restaurants or grabbing something on the run or whatever. Like that was a whole different world. I didn't know how to be a normal person. And I had to learn all over, its like someone losing the feelings in their legs and get them back and learning how to walk again." (Jessica)

Challenges such as budgeting, sexual intimacy and controlling drug use were continual hurdles to face in exiting. **A one-day-at-a-time** approach was commonplace.

13 Afterthoughts

The street trade provided the following short-term solutions: autonomy, financial independence, control, sense of self worth, survival, control of abuse, entry into adulthood, experiences with drug and alcohol, and high energy activity and excitement.

Many interviewed had become disillusioned with their personal choices. They questioned their self-worth; given their decision to enter the street. **Even if their tenure on the street was short-lived, they departed with scars**.

> "...well they'd remember it everyday for the rest of their lives. They'd remember the smell, the taste the looks, you don't forget." (Nicky)

> "And, it made me a different person. It showed me a different way of life that, I shouldn't have learned that early in life. I think it was dangerous." (Shelly)

It is significant that in 1991-1992, the majority - if not all of those respondents who were questioned - viewed entering the street as a bad choice. Ten years later, even with 20/20

hindsight being factored in, entering the street was still perceived as as an action that may have been necessary for survival, but ultimately not a wise decision.

14 Thinking About the Street

The majority believed that the street was not a positive environment. In fact, this population believed this experience would affect the rest of their lives.

> "And there comes a point where it becomes very clear that that's disappearing; that a piece of you is being stripped away every time you turn a trick. And it's your dignity basically, so it became very clear to me after a year that that was, that there wasn't very much of that left and it was fine. If I was going to do anything with my life to get that back or I would never be able to move on from there. And that became very clear. That I had a very clear sense of who I was before I went onto the street, so you recognize it right away when it starts to disappear." (Patricia)

While two females viewed the street as providing some good times, not one male saw it in that manner.

> "The abuse I faced, as a child and young person do not have to be repeated by other boys and young men. There must be work done in this area to help examine the issues that this population face and what support they require to exit from the commercial trade." (Harry)

Eighty-four percent of those interviewed had experienced sexual abuse before the street and **often they perceived this abuse as a contributor to their entry onto the street**. After exiting, individuals were often overcome with the memories of the abuse as small children and on the street. These individuals recognized the **street to be abusive and self-deprecating.**

> "The most challenging, ...I think breaking the pattern of allowing myself to abuse myself or be abused and further create, like being abused or allowing myself to be abused, I haven't allowed myself to heal enough to be comfortable...that's been one of the hardest."(Katlyn)

However, by coming to terms with the abuse on the streets, the **unresolved** initial sexual abuse often **resurfaced**. In a strange way, the street protected them from dealing with or achieving resolution of the sexual abuse they experienced earlier in their lives.

> "I used to enjoy sex, but now I just can't even stand it. I don't even really like when people touch me, you know when he touches me I don't even like it and should be and, it's not that I don't love him, its just that I feel uncomfortable. You know, I'm having like, I used to dream in black and white, and now I dream in color. And now its like it's more real I guess. A lot of things I forgot, I'm starting to remember, so it's scarier for me." (Shelly).

15 Thoughts on Departing

Often it is believed that once a person has made the decision to leave the street they never return.

"Strolling Away" revealed that almost two-thirds of those interviewed described their journey after the street as a battle.

> "I would tell them that they would probably expect a bumpy road ahead of them. That it's not going to be, it's probably going to be harder or tougher than it is living on the street ...Lot's of disappointments." (Sandra)

Some individuals were optimistic as they could see the light at the end of the tunnel. However at times this light was very dim. **While services were provided to individuals who were on the street, there was little long-term assistance for the exiting process.**

> "One of the things I tell them is if you're waiting for somebody to come and save you, you might die. If you are waiting for someone to come and fix you, you will stay broken." (Cherry)

16 Surprise Findings

The respondents were surprised by the following findings:

1. One-quarter of the females in the sample identified the **departure as a long journey**.

   To expect to constantly want to go back, to always have the urge...and it's that life is a lot harder living it normally than it is on the street." (Andrea)

2. Close to one-quarter of males and females were surprised they were able to leave **and live a life beyond the street. Many were shocked that they had experienced a successful transition.**

   "I guess the biggest surprise is how strong a person that I really am. How good of a person that I am, and all the potential that I have that I've never, never really saw or had the encouragement to realize that um, I can conquer this, I can do this, I have done things. That that's sometimes just, surprises the hell out of me." (Sandra)

3. Close to one-quarter of both males and females experienced negative encounters once they left the street. While they believed and expected negative and dishonest interactions on the street, they did not expect such encounters in the "straight world." Although their day-to-day life from the street had changed, they had **not expected this untrusting behavior to occur off the street**.

   "You realize that you pick up a lot more things from people, you become more observant, more aware. You just pay attention a lot better and you put things out and ya know, and you find lies. There's a lot of lies in the real world." (Luke)

17 Rituals

One of the residues from a life on the street involved in sexual exploitation was the carryover of rituals. Many individuals from the street adopt behaviour patterns that are associated with the trade and these patterns or rituals carryover after they leave the street.

Twenty percent of the total population participated in money rituals. This included carrying money in undergarments, shoes and hiding it in numerous places around their homes.

> "Like you never saved, you always just spent it. You live for the moment. And I still do that with money. If I have a chunk of money, you know if I get money for my birthday whatever, I'm out of here, I'm gone and I'm spending. And I'll spend it down to the last dime." (Kathleen)

Many of the individuals lived in **fear of someone accessing their funds**. Numerous bank accounts were commonplace. Given the controlling nature of this business by pimps and the excessive spending habits of those who benefited from the cash, numerous strategies were developed to hide and control the money made in the trade.

> "Stashing my money. I would always stash it always did whatever, I would stash it somewhere. I wouldn't just have it in my wallet." (Samantha)

> "I have secret bank accounts all over. I have like five or six of them." (Sandra)

A cautious, suspicious nature was ever present. Nervousness in reference to possible recognition from their past life was also apparent.

Intensive cleansing rituals such as the daily changing of family member bedding, were also noted. Extensive self-cleaning through very hot showers and the use of baby wipes was not uncommon.

> "I'd have to use baby wipes when I started going to the washroom. And anti-bacterial soap, I'd always clean with that, its like gel not soap. Um, you know when I get pay cheques, I cash it and carry the whole wad in my pocket." (Sheila)

> "And it doesn't matter, I could go, I mean if I run to the store, I've got to take a bath. If I go grocery shopping, when I get home, I put the groceries away and into the bath...we came home from the Laundromat and I had to bath...He says, "You don't stink that bad. Why are you bathing like three times a day?" And I say, just a habit, I don't know." (Liz)

A disturbing carryover ritual for both the female and male population was the pattern of **disassociation during sexual activity.**

> "I certainly didn't really like sex for a long time. Didn't even really like sex before I started doing this job either...and eh, dancing certainly didn't help that ...slobs and not really a romantic evening." (Sandra)

> "And I have a sex problem, big time. I don't enjoy it very much, its not too enjoyable, it's getting better but it takes a real long time to get over memories and just really bad things. Yeah I probably really have a lot of really bad things that are still surfacing, once in awhile I get flashbacks." (Beth)

Often these individuals would "service " their partners. This pattern was used and well developed during early abuse and street sexual exploitation. As long as the abuse and exploitation remained unresolved the response of disassociation would continue.

> "The technique or strategy of disassociation from the experience occurring is one that many sex workers have experience in. Individuals with a history of abuse often use this technique to insulate themselves from the abuse they are experiencing." (McIntyre, 1994:178)

Males were clear in seeing their survival work as having a negative effect on their lives.

> "...for a female sex trade worker she can just moan moreover, pretend, but for males they have to look aroused, you must have some signs of an erection". This young man noted that even if he is giving a blow job to a customer, the customer will always take note of whether he is aroused or not." (McIntyre 1994:181)

18 Off the Street

Permanently leaving the sexual exploitation trade was a challenging experience.

No one in the research population was still **working in the sexual exploitation trade full time**. However one individual who never left the street trade still works two days a week.

Close to three-quarters of those interviewed were totally distanced and far away from the trade.

Twenty percent still worked in some form of the trade in times of financial need – such as going into the trade every few months for an evening. This occurred through phone ads, contact with regular customers, escort service, dancing or street work. This group saw their short-term return as a cash solution for special needs such as family birthdays, Christmas or household needs.

A small portion continued working a few days a week. They all stated a desire to leave permanently but this has yet to occur. The sexual exploitation trade for this group was their livelihood.

Section 4

Concluding Discussion & Recommendations

Males in the Sexual Exploitation Trade

It became clear through "Strolling Away" that males face different challenges than females. It is my belief that this social issue is looked at through a female lens. There has never been a Canadian research study on males involved in the sexual exploitation trade. We need to gain an understanding as to why males turn to the trade at a younger age and work twice as long as females. Males' street tenure appears to last longer as they do not have the option of bearing children. It is imperative that we gain an independent specific **understanding of the entrance, working life and the exiting process for young males embroiled in the trade.**

Recommendation #1: That a **national research study on males** involved in the sexual exploitation trade be undertaken. The goal of the research would be to determine why males enter the trade younger and stay longer and to gain an understanding of the service needs for this population.

Supply and Demand Equation

From this research it became apparent that our attention, minimal prevention materials and interventions are directed towards the supply of youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Outreach programs and secure treatment are designed to support or contain young people who have entered the trade. These forms of interventions are directed at keeping the individual youth involved in the street, safe. It is clear that if we are ever going to conquer this issue a demand approach must be part of the equation. We need to educate with the goal of **impacting and deterring present and future customers**. A need exists to alter the demand for such services. During these interviews both male and female sex workers spoke about the continual flow of customers wanting to purchase their services. This presented a challenge for those trying to escape the trade.

Recommendation #2: That attention is directed toward **decreasing the demand** for the sexual exploitation trade. Prevention materials, directed at **young males**, need to be developed to create awareness that the sexual exploitation trade is a form of sexual abuse.

Education

Peer Education

It is clear that the road out of the sexual exploitation trade is a challenging one. Youth that have exited the trade are not accepted and are scorned by their peers. They are often referred to in derogatory terms such as, slut, whore, etc. Peers require education to understand that youth involved in the trade are being sexually exploited and that many of them have a history of

sexual and physical abuse prior to the street. Many of those interviewed spoke of failed attempts at returning to school; failed attempts at squaring up and re-entering the straight world. **Peer education could impact the successful return for a youth from the trade.**

Recommendation #3: That prevention information is directed towards young women and young men. Both groups need to understand that the sexual exploitation trade is a form of sexual abuse. Young people could be supportive to those escaping this abuse if they understood the dynamics of the trade.

Public Education

There is a need for the public to be educated on the issue of youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade of prostitution. Some provinces have entered into their own campaigns with success. A need exists for a well-researched and focused **national campaign, which provides a consistent message** to potential consumers, those living off the avails, peers, family members, parents, and professionals. It appears that there has been some success with national campaigns on drinking and driving. The same impact is possible with understanding the sexual exploitation trade of youth prostitution.

Recommendation #4: That a national ad campaign be designed with a clear message that prostitution is a form of sexual abuse and that potential customers are in fact sexual abusers.

Parental Education

Recommendation #5: That education material is directed towards parents so they may begin to teach their children at a young age that sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse.

Youth and Caregiver Education

Recommendation #6: That reality-based prevention materials be developed for youth and parents/caregivers. This material would be developed in consultation with experiential individuals, in other words those who have exited the trade on numerous occasions who can therefore provide valuable information.

Recommendation #7: That education material is designed on the process and challenges of leaving the street for youth and parents/caregivers.

Support Services

Family

Many of those interviewed spoke of the heartache they caused their family and caregivers. Over the years, families and caregivers have shared with me the demands this lifestyle places on parents, families and their children. Many years ago in Calgary, I assisted a group of parents challenged by their children's entrance into the trade by meeting with them weekly. This group still meets and provides one another with support.

> "We were all in the same boat and we were able to share our experiences. Many times we laughed and many times we cried. We were there to help new parents entering this heartache." (Helen Shaver, Parent Support Group, September 2001)

In working with parents and caregivers, they spoke of the exhaustion they experienced supporting and staying connected with their youth during these challenging times. It became clear that a greater social support network could be of value. **Services for family and youth support systems restoration are imperative.**

Recommendation #8: That parent/caregiver support groups be established to support parents/caregivers whose children have just entered the trade. These groups would be facilitated by parents/caregivers whose children have been or are still involved in the trade.

Transitioning Youth

During my research, many interviewed spoke of individuals, such as family and friends who assisted them during the transition. **The development of a support team for a young person transitioning off the street could ease the strain on any one individual.** It would bring together a collection of individuals with different skills and relationships with this population

Recommendation #9: That a Support Team be established to assist youth when exiting the trade. The team would support the family and provide the person reintegrating with a choice of individuals for support. The Support Team would also provide a sense of camaraderie and synergy for its own members.

Young persons interviewed spoke about the frustration they experienced in transitioning off the street. Where would they live, work, eat, earn money, attend school and gain services for their personal health and mental health? Many became frustrated chasing down these services and gave up. The transition could be eased and be more successful with **Social Service agencies providing a complete package to youth leaving behind a dangerous, yet self-sufficient lifestyle.**

Recommendation #10: That all-inclusive one-stop service packages be designed for those leaving the trade. To assist in the exiting process, there must be the provision of attainable and viable options. Providing pre-determined packaged options with flexibility in a timely fashion is imperative. These packages would include information on: housing, clothing, health, employment, education, financial assistance and planning, life skills, recreation, and counselling. It is important that these services be designed in a flexible fashion, to accommodate the number of times it takes for an individual to successfully leave the street.

Recommendation #11: That reality based re-integration materials be developed for those individuals who are attempting to re-integrate into society. Again, this material would be developed in consultation with those who have exited the trade and reintegrated back into society.

Youth spoke of the challenges they experienced once they left the street. They were challenged by the transition and felt alone and often bored. They realized by speaking with their friends on the street that they were at risk of returning to the lifestyle. A need exists for this transitioning group to be able to access a phone support system of those who have completed the transition. **This population could benefit from someone who has exited successfully and completed the process of personal adjustment and challenge.**

Recommendation #12: That a volunteer-run service support line be established for those leaving the street. Experiential individuals who have completed their re-integration off the

street would staff the support line, as they would be able to provide first-hand information on the challenges of re-integration.

New Understanding

The research shows that young people can leave this business numerous times. **Non-profit and government organizations need to understand that a youth does not exit the street once**. Often I could sense frustration from professionals when a young person returned to the street. Non-profit and government organizations need to be more flexible and understanding of the transition from the street.

Recommendation #13: That there be an understanding that the challenge begins once a person leaves the street. Services and support programs need to be designed to support a leaving process involves numerous attempts to exit. Designed to support a successful transition, these services should assist young people and their families/caregivers during this critical phase.

Counselling Support

Those interviewed in the research study spoke of a need for counselling support. The experience of the street does not leave anyone quickly. For many, the history of abuse prior to and on the street has remained hidden. **The abuse they experienced on the street begins to surface in other parts of their lives well after they have transitioned.** We need to acknowledge the long-term effects and provide such services to the population we failed to protect.

Recommendation #14: That ongoing counselling support be available to this population to assist them in dealing with the street abuse and prior abuse in their lives.

Social Services

The research respondents could see the process of how they slid into the trade. They spoke about how they would remake decisions if they knew the consequences of their actions. They spoke about how **no one but themselves saw it happening nor prevented it from occurring**.

The respondents spoke of confusion in reference to social service outreach programs. Sometimes these programs **supported them in a neutral fashion and other times approached them from a criminal justice or child protection framework**. Many interviewed spoke of their concern with using these services for fear of what the results would be.

Recommendation #15: That various street outreach programs across the country be seen as safe exempt neutral programs to support youth. That outreach programs not be acting in a law enforcement manner, which deters youth from accessing these services.

Harm Reduction

The methods used in harm reduction approaches to drug abuse have been adopted for youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. An individual interviewed argued against expansion of this service approach. She said we provided her condoms for protection, information on dangerous customers, temporary respite from the abuse out the door and provided her with crisis medical services after violent dates had severely damaged her. She wondered why **no one offered her the opportunity to immediately move to a safe and neutral housing location**.

Recommendation #16: That an **evaluation occurs of harm reduction approaches** to sexually exploited youth.

Conclusion by Harry

I can remember the first time I traded my body for money.

I don't think I knew what a '*prostitute*' was and I certainly had no idea what a '*sexually exploited youth*' was. In fact, I don't even think I knew I was a 'youth'. I was a child, 12 years old, had a paper route, loved video games, and like lots of 12 year olds I was at times irresponsible. One Saturday afternoon I had finished delivering the paper, collected the money and headed downtown and hit the arcade. It's funny, I can't remember any of my birthdays until I was 20 – but I can tell you what colour of shorts I was wearing that day. It didn't take long as I was sliding quarters down the machine…one after another. Wouldn't you know it though…I reach into the deeps of my pocket and what do I find, but nothing? I spent all my money. In fact I didn't just spend my money – I spent the Windsor Star's money. I knew right away that what I had done was wrong and also knew that my father was going to react poorly.

So when an older man asked me if I liked video games and asked why I looked so worried, I told him. He offered to have me come over and 'hang out'. I didn't even question why someone in their twenties would want to associate with a 12 year old, all I heard was 'video games'. It wasn't even an hour later that I first tried cocaine. That was my '*treat*' for having sex with that man. That adult. When I was a child. This led to my eventual involvement in the street trade and a chronic chemical drug addiction. It wasn't until I was 19 that I last traded my body for money, drugs or housing.

Regularly I share this story, my history, in hopes that those working with boys and young men can better appreciate and understand the dynamics of gender and exploitation. Yet too often the issues that face boys and young men are overlooked or ignored. Professionals, community services and government frequently assume that the issues facing young women who are exploited are identical to those of young men. Having said this, funding, policy and program development, and direct services are often not appropriate for boys and young men.

Often, people think that the exploitation that I faced started with that man. When people ask about what brought me to the street trade several years later often they can hear that story and say, 'hmm'. They believe that it was that simple – a paedophile used a vulnerable boy. They often do not understand that what happens to young men and boys prior to being prostituted often leads them to a path of exploitation. That day, in my instance, not only was I dealing with needing money, but also an abusive home life, homosexual feelings that confused me and the self-loathing that came with these issues. There are many issues that face boys and young men, such as responding to sexual abuse, sexuality and gender identity and low self-esteem that have not been extensively researched to date.

I am happy to see in the last five years people starting to address the issue of sexual exploitation in Canada. More and more those in policy and helping roles are recognizing children involved with the commercial sex trade as victims, as opposed to criminals. Though encouraging, there still is a perception in Canada, not only from the public, but also from government and service providers as well that sexually exploited youth equals young girls. (Harry)[4]

[4] Harry was a participant in "Strolling Away."

Appendix 1: Research Questions and Tables*

Table 1 How many times did you leave the street?			
Variable	**Total Combined**	**Male Sample**	**Female Sample**
1-4 times	37%	20%	40%
5-9 times	32%	0%	36%
10-15 times	16%	40%	15%
Over 15 times	13%	20%	9%
Never	2%	20%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 2 What made you want to square up and leave?			
Variable	**Total Combined**	**Male Sample**	**Female Sample**
Pregnant	5%	0%	6%
Enough stress/pressure	24%	0%	27%
Drug abuse	5%	20%	3%
Opportunity/stability	5%	20%	3%
Family pride/self esteem	11%	20%	9%
Violence/deaths/bad date	47%	20%	52%
Never left	3%	20%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

*** Note**

It is important to understand the % range of responses only represent those interviewed, and do not reflect all individuals who have entered the sexual exploitation trade.

Table 3 What made you want to go back?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Money/survival	37%	40%	37%
Pump/street energy	5%	0%	6%
Self esteem/street value	11%	0%	12%
Some services/turf wars	3%	0%	3%
Non-judgmental support	13%	40%	9%
Man/pimp/forced to	17%	0%	21%
Drugs	11%	0%	12%
Never left	3%	20%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 4 What could have prevented you from going back each time?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Not having the demand everywhere	8%	0%	9%
Lack of support had it worked sooner	26%	0%	30%
Lack of options/more options/money	16%	20%	15%
Boredom	10%	20%	9%
Safety/if I had felt safer	3%	0%	3%
Lack of self worth/vision after the street	18%	40%	15%
Too risky to walk away totally/risk to leave	16%	0%	19%
Never left	3%	20%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 5 When was your last trick?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Don't remember my last date	21%	0%	24%
I wasn't sure it was my last date	24%	20%	24%
Remember date, but not who	10%	0%	13%
You commit to the process of leaving, so the details are irrelevant	39%	60%	36%
You control the time and date, you leave so no real clear details	3%	0%	3%
Never left	3%	20%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 6 What made you decide it was your last trick?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Paranoid/lack of trust/safety fear	16%	0%	18%
I didn't fit in/I was pushed into it	5%	0%	6%
The drugs/I couldn't take it	5%	20%	3%
New life/relationship/someone close/alternative	21%	20%	21%
Pregnant	16%	0%	18%
Enough was enough/enough exploitation	29%	40%	28%
Couldn't make the money	5%	20%	6%
Never left	3%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 7 **What were the most important things that assisted you in leaving the street?**			
Variable	**Total Combined**	**Male Sample**	**Female Sample**
Family/spouse/partner/sibling/parent/ Extended	22%	14%	23%
Meeting straight people	10%	0%	12%
Having some goals	8%	8%	8%
Safe place/out of the cold	11%	23%	10%
Self love belief/unconditional love	8%	0%	8%
Trusting someone/drug counselling	13%	23%	12%
Having a baby/a child	9%	8%	8%
Employment/straight life	10%	8%	11%
Clean money/savings	7%	8%	7%
Faith/spirituality	1%	0%	1%
Never left	1%	8%	0
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Note: A prompter format was used. "*What three things*?" prefaced this question. The goal was to create dialogue and thought process for those being interviewed.

Table 8 What were the important things that assisted you in not returning to the street?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Fear/nervous to return	11%	8%	11%
Less stress/no pimp	8%	0%	9%
Vision off the street/pump gone	14%	8%	15%
Fear of drugs/sober now	2%	0%	2%
Religion/belief system	1%	0%	1%
People relying on me	17%	17%	17%
Employment/education	12%	8%	12%
Family support	14%	8%	15%
Flexibility to be off/accommodation	8%	17%	6%
Maturity	5%	17%	5%
Moved away	7%	8%	7%
Never left	1%	8%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 9 What would you say to someone who was getting ready to turn his or her first trick?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Don't/it's not smart	34%	60%	30%
Break the illusion of what it is	26%	0%	30%
This message that it isn't great life is the same for male/females	24%	20%	24%
Helplessness/abuse over and over again	16%	20%	16%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 10 What do you miss from the street?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Money	30%	10%	33%
Freedom	15%	30%	12%
Camaraderie/people/activity party	23%	30%	21%
Adrenaline pump/control	15%	20%	14%
Nothing	16%	0%	20%
Never left	1%	10%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Note: A prompter format was used. "*What three things?*" prefaced this question. The goal was to create dialogue and thought process for those being interviewed.

Table 11 What happened that almost made you go back to the street?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Needed money	30%	17%	31%
Loss/crisis/stress	17%	32%	15%
Alienation/lonely/bored/isolation	12%	17%	12%
Too close activity easy return people	17%	0%	18%
Drugs/addiction	6%	0%	7%
Lack of recognition	3%	17%	2%
Closed doors/lack opportunity marginalized	6%	0%	7%
Nothing	7%	0%	8%
Never left	2%	17%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Note: A prompter format was used. "*What three things?*" prefaced this question. The goal was to create dialogue and thought process for those being interviewed.

Table 12 Could you identify the steps that it took to leave the street behind?			
Variable	**Total Combined**	**Male Sample**	**Female Sample**
Found a safe place to be	13%	0%	15%
Spiritual/god prayer	3%	0%	3%
Learning life & living skills	3%	20%	0%
Reconnect to family	5%	20%	3%
Pregnant	3%	0%	3%
Moved away/distance	16%	20%	15%
Rediscovering self/determination	26%	0%	31%
Support/resources exiting programs	10%	0%	12%
Employment/education	5%	20%	3%
Keeping kids/losing kids	3%	0%	3%
One day at a time	10%	0%	12%
Never left	3%	20%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 13 What was the most challenging lesson you learned after leaving the street?			
Variable	**Total Combined**	**Male Sample**	**Female Sample**
Birth/parenting/reproduction	6%	0%	7%
Negotiating relationships	19%	23%	18%
Trust/overcoming paranoia	19%	23%	19%
Sexual intimacy	2%	8%	1%
Personal recovery/discovering self loss	21%	14%	23%
Control of drug use	3%	0%	3%
Budgeting	9%	8%	9%
Education important	1%	8%	0%
Spirituality/faith	6%	0%	7%
One day at a time/replacing the pump/transition	12%	8%	12%
Never left	1%	8%	0%
Don't know/unsure	1%	0%	1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Note: A prompter format was used. "*What three things*?" prefaced this question. The goal was to create dialogue and thought process for those being interviewed.

Table 14 After leaving the street what do you think about it now?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Revolting/battle scars/long term damage	24%	40%	21%
Black hole quick sand abuse danger	45%	20%	49%
Different/changes you	12%	20%	12%
Being straight okay/positive outlook	5%	0%	6%
Big secret/don't ask, don't tell	3%	0%	3%
Some good times	8%	0%	9%
Never left	3%	20%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 15 If someone was getting ready to leave the street what would you tell them to expect?			
Variable	Total Combined	Male Sample	Female Sample
Lonely/boredom/replace pump	16%	0%	18%
Battle/hard work/light end tunnel	55%	40%	58%
Get support/counselling/heal scars	16%	0%	18%
It's easy to return	5%	20%	3%
Intimacy/relationship problems	5%	20%	3%
Never left	3%	20%	0
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 16 What has been the biggest surprise you have encountered since leaving the street?			
Variable	**Total Combined**	**Male Sample**	**Female Sample**
Long journey	24%	0%	27%
"I can do it"/live life	26%	40%	24%
Treachery/watch	21%	40%	18%
Renewal/spirituality	10%	0%	13%
Positive outlook	16%	0%	18%
Never left	3%	20%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 17 Do you have any carry-over rituals from the street?			
Variable	**Total Combined**	**Male Sample**	**Female Sample**
On guard/vigilante/cautious attitude	9%	18%	7%
Safety overly cautions	12%	9%	12%
Dissociate during sex/sex service	12%	18%	10%
Collect condoms	6%	0%	7%
Money rituals	20%	18%	21%
Trouble normalizing relationships	12%	9%	12%
Attitude protects	7%	0%	9%
Food/weight/eating issues	9%	9%	9%
Excessive hygiene habits	7%	0%	9%
Reminders clothing/needles	4%	9%	3%
Never left	1%	9%	0%
Don't know/unsure	1%	0%	1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Appendix 2:
Strolling Away Background Table

Background Prior Sexual Exploitation Trade						
	Average Age First Trick	*Total Years Street*	*Sexual Abuse*	*Physical Abuse*	*In Care Government*	*Aboriginal Descent*
38 Total Interviews	14 yr.	260 yr. (Avg. 7yrs)	84%	79%	61%	26%
Females 87%	15 yr.	200 yr. (Avg. 6 yr.)	82%	78%	61%	24%
Males 13%	12 yr.	60 yr. (Avg. 12 yr.)	100%	100%	60%	40%

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Glossary

BAD DATE:

When a customer/trick harms and/or rips a sex trade worker off. This often involves physical abuse and sometimes weapons.

BLOW JOB:

Oral sex/fellatio that a sex trade worker gives to a customer/trick. Male sex trade workers will often allow a customer/trick to give them a blow job. "French" is also another term used for blow job.

BUDDY:

Customer/trick who purchases the woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money.

CONDOMS:

Safe sex, sheiks, rubbers prophylactics and covers are other terms used for condoms.

DATE:

Customer/trick who purchases the woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money.

DOPE PUSHER:

An individual who sells non-prescription or prescription drugs illegally.

FEMINIST RESEARCH:

"Feminist Research investigates the aspects of women's oppression while seeking at the same time to be part of the struggle against it." (McIntyre 1995:15)

GAME:

Slang term used for the activity of prostitution.

GROUNDED THEORY:

"At the beginning of the research, interviews usually consist of open-ended conversations during which the respondents are allowed to talk with no imposed limitations of time. Often researchers sit back while the respondents tell their stories." (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:76)

HAND JOB:

Sex trade worker masturbates customer.

HIGH:

The physiological and mental reaction to drugs.

HO/HOE/HOOKER:

Term for sex trade worker most often used for women such as "ladies of the night".

HUSTLER:

Term most often used for male sex worker.

JOHN:

Is a customer who purchases the woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money. They are also referred to as "customer", "trick", "buddy" or "date".

LAY:

"Lay" is a term for vaginal intercourse.

LINES OF INQUIRY:

Lines of inquiry represent the method of open-ended questioning in specific topic areas.

MAN:

"Man" usually means pimp that a woman is working for/ involved with.

MAINSTREAM FOLKS:

People not involved in prostitution.

MY PEOPLE:

The family that the sex worker is associated with usually means pimp and wife-in-laws, but often can mean large family associated with sex work.

PROSTITUTION:

An individual who engages in sexual activity for the exchange of money or products.

PUMP:

The energy described by sex trade workers on the street. All the activity and the unpredictable nature of street live.

RITUALS:

A pattern of behaviour that occurs in specific situations.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TRADE:

A youth who exchanges sexual activity with adults for money or products.

SNOWBALL SAMPLING:

Persons interviewed may tell others about the research.

SQUARE:

A person not knowledgeable about the streets.

SQUARED UP:

When a woman leaves the business sometimes leaving man/pimp/family in the process.

STRAIGHT PEOPLE:

People not involved in prostitution.

STROLL:

Area where someone works on the street. Known as "stroll" because the sex worker walks up and down it. This constant movement was necessary historically because of the old Vagrancy charges. There is a distinction of "high stroll", meaning more expensive sex workers, like "high track". "Low stroll" is same as "low track" meaning less expensive sex workers.

TRACK:

The street where you work is known as the "track" or "stroll". No one knows for sure why it is called track. Some relevant connotations are: that it is the wrong side of the tracks; track marks up and down arms; often by railway tracks; people drive up and down like they are on tracks. "Tracks" are sometimes seen as high and low. "High track" meaning higher quality girls and prices and "low track" meaning lower quality girls and prices.

TRADE:

Slang term used for the activity of prostitution.

TRICK:

Customers who purchase the woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money. The customer is also known as "buddy", "john" or "date".

TURNED HIM:

"Turned him" refers to action with a customer. It means that the money is exchanged and sex act is completed. "Turned a trick" is another term for "turned him".

TURNED OUT:

When a sex trade worker first began working is referred to as "turning out".

TURNED A TRICK:

When sex trade worker completes a transaction with a customer and this is also known as "turned him".

YOUTH IN CARE AND CUSTODY NETWORK:

An advocacy organization for youth who are in the care of government. Adults who were youth in the care of government manage this organization.

YOUTH PROSTITUTION:

A youth who enters the sexual exploitation trade.

Dr. Susan McIntyre

Dr. McIntyre has been a Manager involved in the non-profit sector for over 20 years. During this time she has been an advocate, educator, therapist and researcher for youth that have been sexually abused.

Dr. McIntyre's experience working with families and children in the treatment of juvenile justice arenas has allowed her to develop expertise in program management and development.

A strong track record in identifying and meeting the needs of organizations, she was responsible for 25 start-up operations in the private and public sectors and guided them from the concept stage through to full implementation and evaluation.

Possessing a unique blend of social services expertise and business know-how, Dr. McIntyre understands the social sector's challenge of meeting mission goals while integrating mainstream business practices and accountability into daily operations. She has developed expertise in the creation and implementation of business plans that include revenue projections and cash flow.

Dr. McIntyre has also earned the respect from Calgary's corporate sector and Foundations for her analytical and business approach in matching a company's community interests to high priority social issues. She has secured sustaining sponsorship from 15 leading national and international corporations.

A strong community advocate, Dr. McIntyre has co-chaired numerous committees and task forces involving justice, social services, health services and education.

Recognized for her expertise on child sexual abuse and prostitution, Dr. McIntyre is an international research and policy advisor. She has provided over 100 workshop presentations and keynote addresses at provincial, national and international conferences.

Throughout her career, Dr. McIntyre has emphasized the relationship between law, social policy and research in the development of social programs.